



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
Children and Domestic Violence Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2017 at 10am

Division of Family Services – University Plaza Large Conference Room

The DVCC Children and Domestic Violence Committee met on December 4, 2017, at 10am at the Division of Family Services in New Castle County. In attendance were Natasha Smith (DVCC Staff), Jennifer Oppel (Peoples Place), Carla Benson-Green (DFS), Taneka Purnell-Tingle (Peoples Place), Erin O'Connor (Peoples Place), Bridget Walters (Child Inc.), Maureen Monagle (DVCC Staff), Regina Johnson (DPBHS), Josette Manning (DSCYF), Ellie Torre (Family Court), Sonya Tull (Child Inc.), Colleen Woodall (DFS), via phone Claire DeMatteis (Family Court) and Mariann Kenville-Moore (DCADV).

Called to Order: Secretary Manning called the meeting to order.

Introductions: Introductions were made by those in attendance.

Minutes from August 28, 2017: Minutes were approved as written.

Old Business

Family Court Enhancement Project

Ellie Torres (Family Court) stated that Family Court will be videotaping the script that judicial officers share with litigants on PFA Day. This videotaped script will eventually be available online. There are also draft PFA packets that are being developed with Delaware Law School for distribution and placement in the self-help centers. Judge Ranji also has a task force reviewing how information gets from PFA process to Custody process to reduce any lag time in information getting to a judicial officer. The Family Court Enhancement Project also had a group go to Chicago to shadow the Mediation Expeditor process for cases that may have had a history of domestic violence. The project is unsure if that is something that can be implemented in Delaware.

Next Steps – Safe and Together Model

Natasha Smith (DVCC Staff) shared that paperwork from DFS and the DV liaison program has been sent to the Safe and Together Institute in preparation for interviews with key DV liaison partners. These interviews will take place in December 2017 and will include the domestic violence liaisons, domestic violence agency leadership, Division of Family Services leadership as well as former employees.

Perpetrator of Domestic Violence and Rebuttable Presumption

Ellie shared a draft of the Perpetrator of Domestic Violence legislative changes. The draft has not been approved and will be discussed at the January Judges meeting. Part of the draft clarifies what “findings” define a perpetrator of domestic violence as well as expanding the list of additional offenses that would define someone as a perpetrator of domestic violence. There were questions regarding how these changes could affect victims as well as those who completed the First Offenders Program successfully.

Divorced and Separating Parent Education Course

Regina Johnson (DPBHS) discussed that she had completed 23 site visits with providers for the Separating and Divorcing Parenting Education Course. Regina stated that all of the providers had up to date documentation as well as locations that were appropriate for classes to take place. Regina stated that each of the providers has a sliding scale and participants are able to discuss any challenges regarding payment with the class facilitator. If participants qualify fees may result in a reduced cost or free.

Regina was also able to provide some data from evaluations taken by Separating and Divorcing Parent Education Class participants in Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017. Below is a summary of the questions/topics asked on the evaluation as well as the responses.

- 1. Ways to Resolve conflict with my former spouse.**
FY 17 93% gained some or a great deal of knowledge.
FY 16 97% gained some or a great deal of knowledge.
- 2. Impact of separation and divorce on children.**
FY 17 100% gained some or a great deal of knowledge
FY 16 99.2% gained some or a great deal of knowledge.
- 3. Ways to talk about parenting.**
FY 17 98% gained some or a great deal of knowledge
FY 16 97% gained some or a great deal of knowledge
- 4. Answering my children's questions about divorce.**
FY 17 91% gained some or a great deal of knowledge
FY 16 98% gained some or a great deal of knowledge
- 5. Helping my child manage anger.**
FY 17 98% gained some or a great deal of knowledge
FY 16 87% gained some or a great deal of knowledge.

Participants who attended classes with the domestic violence component included:

- 1. Understand the cycles and types of family violence.**
FY17 Entering Data
FY 16 100% gained some or a great deal of knowledge.
- 2. How domestic violence affects every member of the household.**
FY 17 Entering Data
FY 16 100% gained some or a great deal of knowledge.

3. **Ways to cope with stress conflict and anger.**

FY17 Entering Data

FY 16 100% gained some or a great deal of knowledge.

4. **Knowledge of safety through protection from abuse orders, shelters, visitation centers or counseling centers.**

FY 17 Entering Data

FY 16 100% gained some or a great deal of knowledge.

Comments from Participants

- The class helped them talk to their youth about emotional concerns
- Helped parents understand the importance of having a conversation with their children about divorce, separation and visitation.
- It was helpful to have a group to discuss concerns about divorce.

Comments from Facilitators

- Would like sessions offered to couples before they are married
- Parents are often uncomfortable and frustrated about attending SDPE Sessions. By the end of the classes, parents are comfortable and enjoyed learning the information.

Ellie Torres (Family Court) summarized research on the effectiveness of parent education programs. That summary included that it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of parent education programs. In addition studies have shown that there is a high level of parent satisfaction with these programs that could be seen as beneficial in assisting parents and children through the divorce transition. Also, studies have shown that online classes are just as effective as in-person classes, yet the same issues apply in evaluating the quality of the programs.

Ellie also stated that effective January 1, 2018, Family Court will implement a rule change that separating and divorcing parenting courses will still be a requirement for custody cases however it will not be a barrier to have a custody petition scheduled before a Judge. Those present discussed some of the concerns around creating an online course such as the need to certify certain providers the same as in-person classes.

Mariann Kenville-Moore is in the process of developing a one page bench card for Judges regarding the Separating and Divorcing Parent Education Course. Ellie Torres (Family Court) and Regina Johnson (DPBHS) will look for examples of online parent education courses that can be shared with the committee.

New Business

Mariann sat in on a call for with the Quality Improvement Center on Domestic Violence in Child Welfare Grant in September 2017. Mariann stated that the grant is a very specific research grant that may not be compatible with the current Safe and Together grant.

Announcements

Mariann stated that in reviewing the Criminal Code Rewrite the independent charge of endangering the welfare of the child has been eliminated and may now be assumed under the charge of reckless

endangering. Mariann stated that there is a possibility that legislation for the Criminal Code Rewrite code be presented to the legislature as early as January 2018. Mariann also stated that Attorney General Matt Denn sent written comments to the Chief Justice regarding the revised criminal code.

Next Meeting Dates: Monday, March 5, 2018 at 1:30pm at University Plaza Conference Room
Monday, April 30, 2018 at 10am at University Plaza Conference Room
Monday, August 27, 2018 at 10am at University Plaza Conference Room
Monday, December 3, 2018 at 10am at University Plaza Conference Room

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